

Andrew Jackson to James Hamilton Jr., June 29, 1828, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO MAJOR JAMES HAMILTON, JR.

Hermitage, June 29, 1828.

My dear sir, I have had the pleasure to receive your kind letter of the 25th ult. with its inclosures, for which I thank you. I have read your speech with much attention, and permit me to assure you, if we differ in some matters of doctrine as to political economy, I am sure it is an honest difference of opinion, and I will always do Justice to your sincerity.

I regretted to see the subject of a Tariff discussed under the strong feelings of political excitement that prevaded the whole nation, and congress. To regulate a Judicious tariff is a subject of great dificulty at all times, and ought to be discussed, with great calmness and due deliberation, with an eye to the prosperity of the whole Union, and not of any particular part viewing the whole as one great family, and extending impartial Justice to every branch with feelings of mutual concession, extending to all equal benefits, and each bearing a Just portion of the burdens the Tariff may impose. Whether the late act will operate equally upon every section of the union, can only be tested by experience.

There is nothing that I shudder at more than the idea of a seperation of the Union. Should such an event ever happen, which I fervently pray god to avert, from that date, I view our liberty gone. It is the durability of the confederation upon which the general goverment is built, that must prolong our liberty, the moment it seperates, it is gone. The State goverments hold in check the federal, and must ever hold it in check, and the virtue of the people supported by the sovereign States, must prevent consolidation, and will put

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down that corruption engendered by executive patronage, wielded, as it has been lately, by executive organs, to perpetuate their own power; The result of the present struggle between the virtue of the people and executive patronage will test the stability of our government, and I for one do not despair of the republic; I have great confidence in the virtue of a great majority of the people, and I cannot fear the result. The republic is safe, its main pillars virtue, religion and morality will be fostered by a majority of the people, the designing demagogues who have attempted to retain power by the most corrupt means will be driven by the indignant frowns of the people into obscurity, and if ever thereafter remembered, will be, as a Silla or caribdis.

I sincerely regret the determination you have taken to withdraw from public life;¹ you cannot be spared from the councils of the nation; your services are still necessary to aid in bringing back the administration to the virtuous precepts of a Washington and Jefferson, in renewing the land marks of the constitution, between the states and general government, and to aid in the necessary amendments of the constitution.

¹ Hamilton retired from Congress Mar. 3, 1829.

I sincerely thank you for the slip cut out of the Telegraph—your father² in his reply has displayed the true Roman, he loves his friend, but he loves truth more. I was truly gratified in receiving it, and was much astonished that Col Willett should have been the author of such a production—present me affectionately to your father, say to him his reply has added to his fame, it is approved by all, whilst all honest patriots must disapprove Col Willetts conduct, his publication must forever tarnish his fame. I hope you have recd the reply made to Col Willetts publication in the Nashville republican; it nails his falshood to the counter, it was sent you by Major H. Lee.

² James Hamilton, sr., was a Revolutionary soldier, an aide-de-camp to General Washington. He was an influential man in South Carolina.

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My health is good. Mrs. J. makes to you a tender of her affectionate regard, and desires me to say to you that she will comply with your instructions as far as she has the power, and unites with me in kind salutations to you and your amiable family

Sincerely yr friend